

Message Text

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SUBJECT: JAPAN'S URANIUM ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN ENGLISH ASAHI EVENING
NEWSPAPER, NOVEMBER 1, 1976:

PARA. THREE LEADING FIRMS IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR ENERGY
EQUIPMENT--TOKYO SHIBAURA ELECTRIC CO. (TOSHIBA), HITACHI,
LTD. AND MITSUBISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES, LTD.--HAVE REACHED
A BASIC AGREEMENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT FIRM
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE
CENTRIFUGAL SEPARATORS WHICH ARE NEEDED FOR A DOMESTIC
URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT.

PARA. THEY HAVE BEGUN CONCRETE PREPARATIONS, INCLUDING THE
SELECTION OF THE SITE OF THE PLANT. DETAILS WILL BE WORKED
OUT WITHIN THIS CALENDAR YEAR, AND THEY INTEND TO ESTAB-
LISH THE FIRM THROUGH JOINT INVESTMENT WITHIN FISCAL 1976,
WHICH ENDS OF MARCH 31, 1977.

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PARA. THIS WILL BE THE FIRST TIME THAT THE THREE

INDEPENDENT FIRMS HAVE WORKED TOGETHER IN A MAJOR SECTOR OF THE NUCLEAR ENERGY FIELD, AND IT IS EXPECTED TO HAVE A GREAT EFFECT ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW TYPES OF REACTORS, BEGINNING WITH THE HIGH-SPEED BREEDER REACTOR.

PARA. THE POWER REACTOR AND NUCLEAR FUEL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WILL BEGIN CONSTRUCTION OF A PILOT PLANT FOR A DOMESTIC URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT IN FISCAL 1977, AND IT IS TRYING TO DECIDE WHICH FIRM IT SHOULD ASK TO MAKE THE CENTRIFUGAL SEPARATORS.

PARA. THE TWO KINDS OF TEST EQUIPMENT PRODUCED BEFORE WERE DESIGNED AND MANUFACTURED SEPARATELY BY THE THREE FIRMS IN CONCERT WITH THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, BUT THE THREE DECIDED TO ESTABLISH A JOINT FIRM FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

1. THE PILOT PLANT WILL COST ABOUT YEN50,000

MILLION (\$175M) SO THE COST BURDEN AND THE FACILITIES INVESTMENTS WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE MADE BY THE MAKERS WILL BE VERY LARGE.

2. THE AVOIDANCE OF OVERLAPPING INVESTMENTS AND A CONCENTRATION OF TECHNOLOGY WILL BE MORE ECONOMICAL.

PARA. THE NEW JOINT FIRM WILL DESIGN THE 7,000 CENTRIFUGAL SEPARATORS WHICH WILL BE NEEDED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S PILOT PLANT. THEN THE CENTRIFUGES MANUFACTURED IN THE FACTORIES OF THE THREE FIRMS WILL BE ASSEMBLED AND TESTED.

PARA. EVENTUALLY THEY INTEND TO CONSTRUCT A PLANT WHICH CAN PRODUCE 100,000 CENTRIFUGAL SEPARATORS A YEAR FOR TEST PLANTS AND PRACTICAL PLANTS.

PARA. BECAUSE THE ENRICHMENT OF URANIUM IS SO IMPORTANT, THE THREE FIRMS HELD A JOINT DEVELOPMENT MEETING ON THE CENTRIFUGAL SEPARATION OF ENRICHED URANIUM IN OCTOBER, 1974, AND HAVE BEEN CARRYING OUT RESEARCH EVER SINCE.

PARA. TOSHIBA AND HITACHI HAVE A TECHNICAL TIE-UP
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WITH GENERAL ELECTRIC ON THE BOILING WATER TYPE LIGHT-WATER REACTOR, WHILE MITSUBISHI HAS A TIE-UP WITH WESTINGHOUSE ON A PRESSURIZED-WATER TYPE LIGHT-WATER REACTOR. UNQUOTE HODGSON UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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